In the Claims

1. (currently amended): A method of refining a ferroalloy, ~~including the step of~~ comprising blowing molecular oxygen or a gas mixture including molecular oxygen into a melt of the ferroalloy, wherein a metallurgically acceptable particulate material is introduced from above into the melt, the particulate material being carried into the melt in a first supersonic gas jet which travels to the melt shrouded by a second gas jet, and the second gas jet is a supersonic gas jet.

2. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1, wherein the metallurgically acceptable particulate material is selected from the group consisting of metals that are to be included in the refined alloy, alloys of said metals, ~~and~~ oxides of said metals, and mixtures thereof.

3. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~, wherein the ferroalloy contains at least 30% by weight of iron.

4. (currently amended): A method according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 , wherein the ferroalloy is ferrochrome and the metallurgically acceptable particulate material comprises an oxide of chromium.

5. (original) :A method according to claim 4, wherein the oxide of chromium is chromite.

6. (currently amended): A method according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the metallurgically acceptable particulate material comprises ferrochrome.

7. (currently amended): A method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 ~~to 3~~, wherein the ferroalloy is a stainless steel and the metallurgically acceptable particulate material is an oxide of chromium.

8. (currently amended): A method according to claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~, wherein the ferroalloy is ferromanganese and the metallurgically acceptable particulate material is an oxide of manganese.

9. (currently amended): A method according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~in which~~ wherein the metallurgically acceptable particulate material is introduced into the melt in fine particulate form.

10. (currently amended): A method according to claim 9, wherein ~~the~~ a mean particle of the metallurgically acceptable particulate material is 1 mm or less.

11. (currently amended): A method according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ a gas that forms the first supersonic gas jet is selected from the group consisting of an oxidising gas, a non-oxidising gas, or a mixture of an oxidising gas and a non-oxidising gas.

12. (original): A method according to claim 11, wherein the oxidising gas is oxygen.

13. (currently amended): A method according to claim 11 ~~or claim 12~~, wherein the non-oxidising gas is selected from the group consisting ~~one or both~~ of argon, ~~and~~ steam and combinations thereof.

14. (currently amended): A method according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the second gas jet is formed of burning gases.

15. (currently amended): A method according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~in which~~ wherein the first supersonic gas jet is ejected from a first Laval nozzle at a velocity in the range of Mach 1.5 to Mach 4 and the second gas jet is ejected from a second Laval nozzle at a velocity ~~also~~ in the range of Mach 1.5 to Mach 4.

16. (original): A method according to claim 15, wherein the first and second Laval nozzles form part of a metallurgical lance comprising an axial first gas passage terminating at its outlet and in the first Laval nozzle, a shrouding gas passage about the main gas passage terminating at its outlet end in the second Laval nozzle, and a particulate material transport passage having an axial outlet which communicates with the first Laval nozzle.

17. (currently amended): A method according to claim 16, wherein the ~~said~~ axial outlet terminates in ~~the~~ a divergent part of the first Laval nozzle.

18. (currently amended): A method according to claim 16 ~~or claim 17~~, wherein the shrouding gas passage comprises a combustion chamber.

19. (currently amended): A method according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the metallurgically acceptable particulate material is introduced into the melt continuously during a first part of a refining operation.

20. (currently amended): A method according to claim 19, ~~in which~~ wherein the first supersonic gas jet comprises oxygen and introduction of the first gas jet into the melt continues after introduction of the metallurgically acceptable particulate material into the melt has ceased.

21. (currently amended): A method according to claim 20, ~~in which~~ wherein introduction of the first supersonic gas jet into the melt ceases before the end of the refining operation.